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THE TALE OF THREE CITIES : NEW ORLEANS, PHILADELPHIA, CHARLESTON *

To give an outline of the peculiarities belonging to the different sections of our country, to crystallize the predominant traits, the epochs of historical events, the crises of place and people, without becoming prosy, demands of a writer almost genius. Three of our oldest and most distinctive cities, Charleston, Philadelphia and New Orleans, have found biographers who have accomplished this with but few dull pages in their volumes.

Miss King has limned "New Orleans, The Place and The People," with delicate touches, and glowing colors. Younger than Charleston or Philadelphia, yet, as American cities go, New Orleans has almost antiquity and holds more dramatic incidents in her history than any other city in the United States.

"We personify cities by ascribing to them the feminine gender," says Miss King, "and New Orleans is among cities the most feminine." To pursue the analogy, New Orleans has the *insouciance* of a Frenchwoman. Intense, dramatic, pleasure-loving by turns; meeting with dignity indignity, bearing with fortitude misfortune, rising courageously when the storm of adversity is over to work in mart or dock, to dance in Elysian Fields; bizarre at *Mardi Gras*, at all times full of *bienséance*, she sings a *chanson*, arranges *chapel ardente*, keeps *carême* with pious devotion, and at every turn of the wheel receives what Heaven sends à *bonne foi*.

What stately figures cross the pages of the volume — soldiers, martyrs, nuns, philanthropists — each class doing well its part, many of the lives interwoven with romance until the book reads "as if it were a novel."

The story of St. Denis—Miss King dubs him, "a literary and adventurous expert" — belongs to the early days of the colony. It is too long to give, too well written for one to dare to abridge.

* "NEW ORLEANS, The Place and The People," by Grace King; "PHILADELPHIA, The Place and The People," by Agnes Repplier; "CHARLESTON, The Place and The People," by Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel. New York: The Macmillan Company.

"The Ursuline Sisters" are most interesting. "With wives," Iberville had written, "I will anchor the roving *coureur de bois* into sturdy colonists," and "the paternal government" — to Louisiana as England to Virginia — "sent ships freighted in France to sail to the port of Hymen." "Of all the voyages across the ocean in those days, none so stirs the imagination or the hearts of women to-day. Upon no colonial scene has the musing hour of women been so prolific of fancy as upon the arrival of a girl-freighted ship in the matrimonial haven." A quarter of a century later the coming of these vessels created a new demand. "There were children to be educated, orphans to be reared, old and infirm to be cared for" — again an appeal was made to the mother-country for women — "not wives, but sisters;" and the Ursulines established an order in New Orleans. "The Company of the West" built a convent for them in which they continued ninety years, when they moved to their present quarters. The Convent of the Ursulines of New Orleans is the oldest establishment in the United States for the education of young ladies. Madeline Hanchard (a postulant, one of the young women) tells, in letters which have been preserved, minute details of the coming of the Ursulines to the New World. The *Gironde* had a perilous voyage. It struck against rocks, winds were contrary, a terrible storm destroyed live stock, there was no butter nor salt meat, and the pork was spoiled; rations were so short as to foreshadow starvation. A pirate was sighted, and when almost at the "haven they would be" they were grounded on the sand bank of an island. Five months to a day the voyage lasted and never once did the "Mother Superior lose her calmness and courage, nor for a moment regretted the holy mission she had undertaken."

"The colonists, delighted to be relieved of the expense of sending their daughters to France for an education, soon provided the Ursulines all the scholars they could attend to." These good women not only trained white girls, but gathered Indian and negro girls under their care; and not only for religious instruction, but they taught them to read and to sew. An orphanage and hospital was established. "Generation after generation in passing through their hands — daughters, grand-

daughters, great-grand-daughters, rich and poor, brides for governors and officers, noble and base, *bourgeoisie* and military—they became a hereditary force; in truth, it is not an exaggeration to say that there is no Louisiana woman living to-day who directly or indirectly is not beholden, for some virtue, charm, or accomplishment, to that devoted band who struggled across the ocean in the *Gironde*."

The transfer of the colony from French to Spanish rule is a narration of brutal tyranny told with thrilling power. A self-reliant province of intelligent, cultured, patriotic and progressive people was traded off without one word to ask their consent or even to advise them of what was to occur! "Upon publication of the fact in the city, the inhabitants were transfixed with consternation. Men were still alive among them who had taken possession of the country in its wild state of nature, who had founded it, established it, and held it firm to France, with but little help from the mother-country, against both Englishman and Spaniard—to be tossed without the asking from Louis XV to Carlos III, to be made over in a secret bargain to the despised Spaniards!"

A convention was held, a protest made against Spanish dominion, able men sent as a delegation to France. They never saw the King. "De Choiseul listened with perfect politeness, promised the interview with the King, promised his influence, promised everything, and—never kept his word." The culmination was that five of the noblest citizens were sentenced, as rebels against Spain, to an ignominious death. "The whole city, men and women of every rank, threw themselves before O'Reilly in an appeal for at least a suspension of the sentence until royal clemency could be invoked." He was inexorable. "Bloody O'Reilly" with "Beast Butler" stand in the annals of New Orleans as twin brothers in infamy. When, during the Civil War, the city was surrendered to the Federals, and a rash boy in the hot excitement of the moment tore down the United States flag which had been hurriedly raised over the mint, the Federal General, with a smile, said: "I will make an example of that young fellow and hang him!" The threat was executed, and young Munford was hanged. A cry of horror, as in the day

of O'Reilly again arose in the city; but General Butler exceeded after this even the atrocities of the Spaniard. The "Order 28," against the ladies of New Orleans, issued by Butler, was an outrage on civilization—an order so vile that both the House of Lords of England condemned it as "without precedent" and the House of Commons as "against the feelings of the Nineteenth Century."

New Orleans has been rich in men who loved their kind—philanthropists. The McDonough Schools perpetuate the name of a man whose love-story reads like a novel. Judah Truso, the noble Israelite, while living, gave four hundred thousand dollars to charity. Paul Tulane's name lives in the University he so richly endowed. Sweetest of all is Margaret Haughery, the first woman in all America to whom a statue was raised. Who was she?

A woman who made bread, who by her stall
Or by her bake-shop door sat day by day,
Selling her wares in simple honest way.

A childless, penniless widow at twenty, she worked in a hotel laundry, then bought a dairy and established a bakery. So good was her bread, so prospered her ventures that all through the cities were "Margaret Bakeries." She built an asylum for infants, a training school for grown girls, while she lived. Every one in the city knew and loved her. When she died she willed thousands to the orphan asylums of the city. She did not forget one—white or colored, Protestant, Jew, or Catholic.

Philadelphia is a Quaker Matron. Dignified, self-poised, neat, faithful, she has thrown aside any youthful follies into which in girlhood she was betrayed. "She is content," says her biographer, "to face the future if she can hold closely to the past—loving in her cold steadfast fashion the living links which connect her with her honorable history, with her great past in the great story of the Nation."

Philadelphia has in her annals romance and tragedy, but a reader questions if any one but Miss Repplier, with her inimitable humor, could have made this history of so great an interest. From the first chapter in the book "The Founder of the Quaker

City," in which a most charming sketch of the wonderful Penn is given, to the last, on "The Quaker City of To-day," there is continuous and freshly awakened interest. Pen-portraits of men and women are far more lifelike than photographs. With bold lines and delicate shadings the pictures are sketched until they seem in panoramic view to pass before the mind's eye. Penn's treaty with the Indians at Shackampon is described as "the story of a great treaty made and kept. The Indians cherished its memory for generations, the Quakers were justly proud of the deed that did them infinite credit, and the English have always vied with Americans in honoring a compact which, as Voltaire lucidly remarked, was 'the only treaty between savages and Christians that had not been ratified by an oath and that was never broken.'"

Philadelphia "was a community where good wages were paid to all who toiled honestly with their hands, but where brain workers were not greatly in demand." It seems queer to read this of the city, afterward the home of the greatest brainworker (Dr. Franklin) this continent has ever produced. In the beginning, "farmers and mechanics were made welcome, but the country was healthy and peaceable, physicians and lawyers were not thought needful."

The maid-servant question was a vexation — no doubt it confronted Eve as soon as she was put out of Paradise! "The wages paid women in the colony were disproportionately high, because young girls were sought so eagerly in marriage that female servants were always hard to keep." One old chronicler quoted, writing of this period, said: "Here are no beggars to be seen nor has any one the least temptation to take up that scandalous, lazy life. Jealousy among men is very rare, nor are old maids to be met with, for all commonly marry, before they are twenty years of age."

Into this Eden the Scotch Presbyterians brought discord — good people in their way, but contentious. "They had no patience or tolerance of the Quakers, whom they regarded with unconcealed aversion and contempt." They were impatient with the Indians, quarrelsome, arrogant and rough in their manner. "It became in time a difficult matter to keep the peace with the

savages, perpetually angered by encroachments and high-handed injustice." With the advent of the Episcopalians, not emulating the Quaker practise of toleration to all religious persuasions, fresh discord was added. "They had expected the Quakers to claim complete tolerance for their own worship and were prepared to concede as much with good grace; but they had never anticipated this strange, serene, perverse colony, where all creeds were on an equally absurd footing, and where the time-honored privilege of snubbing dissenters and persecuting Papists was rigorously denied them." In spite of these differences it was a prosperous community. "It was built up on solid foundations of industry and thrift, having Franklin's maxims for its weekday sermons and Franklin's shining example to illustrate the text." The world at large owes much to Franklin; but Philadelphia, as New Orleans with the Ursulines, can never estimate the debt she owes him—it is illimitable.

"How Philadelphia Spent Her Money," and "The Birth of Learning," are chapters giving the interesting details of the founding and fostering of the Pennsylvania Hospital, the Libraries, the Academy of Sciences, the University of Pennsylvania and other institutions dignifying the city. But the world, the flesh and the devil are alluring. "Gayer and gayer grew the Quaker City, that had been so demure in childhood. Coaches emblazoned with heraldic devices rolled through the ill-paved streets. In winter the frozen Delaware would be covered with merry throngs." "In the bitter cold of winter nights, wax candles shone softly down on Philadelphia's sons and daughters as they met for the famous dancing assemblies that date from 1749." "Quakers, though not dancing themselves, had been serenely content that others should." "These balls, if they somewhat scandalized the elect, were favored with the approbation of the Episcopal clergy, who were well disposed towards any form of entertainment which the Quakers rejected and of which the Presbyterians disapproved." "The Assemblies began at precisely six o'clock in the evening, and by midnight dancers were all wending their ways homeward." "Card tables were prepared for the amusement of those who did not dance, and who appear to have been less patient then than now, and less dis-

posed to play a purely passive part." "The invitations were often printed on the decorated backs of common playing-cards, blank cards of any kind being exceedingly scarce." "No wife nor daughter of a mechanic or tradesman was suffered to enter the Assemblies, which were rigidly aristocratic."

"The Eve of the Revolution," "The Dawn of The Revolution," "The War," "A Gay Captivity," with gay DeLancey and gallant Andrè and the ladies of the famous Mischianza, are alluring themes. "The Lords of Misrule," albeit a stirring story, is a sad one. Armies are demoralizing. Philadelphia had been in the hands of the British, then the Americans came in possession, and the city, "having suffered sadly from her foes, found herself, on the return of her friends, in a worse case than ever." "There was a fierce rage for vengeance upon the Tories, and the selection of a few victims to appease the people, became a matter of necessity." Two men were hanged. Elizabeth Drinker, from whose diary Miss Repplier often quotes, says, "An awful day it has been."

From principle, the Quakers were non-combatants, and on their devoted heads the dishonest demagogue found his opportunity of assumed patriotism. In pretense of collecting unpaid taxes for militia purposes, mahogany tables, mirrors, silver cups and dishes, sconce looking glasses, etc., were seized. The list suggests that of Butler when operating in New Orleans in the days of the Confederacy.

"The Riots in the City of Brotherly Love" holds the lesson that the world is no worse, and that poor human nature from some exciting cause will always show its baser part. "The anti-slavery agitation, which grew more violent after 1830, awoke such passionate resentment and opposition in the hearts of the masses that riot followed riot. Negroes were pelted in the streets, white men who pleaded their cause were pelted on the platform. Houses occupied by negroes were burned to the ground." "This sustained defiance of law and order paved the way for the serious riots of 1844 — 'the Native American Riots,' as they were called, because they arose from the clamorous opposition offered by the Native American Association, to the equally vehement demand of the Roman Catholics, that chil-

dren belonging to their Church should, when attending religious instruction in the public schools, be permitted to use the Douai instead of the King James Bible." "This controversy, being well established and a consecrated character given to the struggle, the outbreak began, as most outbreaks begin, through the desire of one faction to hold meetings and denounce their opponents, and the impulse of the other faction to break up the meeting with brickbats." A meeting held by the Native Americans in the vicinity of the Hibernian Hose Company culminated in the Hibernians attacking the Americans, guns were fired from houses, one lad was killed and several persons were injured. "Fiercer and fiercer, under cover of darkness, the riot raged;" an attempt was made by the Native Americans to burn a school house occupied by the Sisters of Charity and their pupils—helpless creatures who had been guilty of no violence and who could not even avoid being in danger's way. They were staunchly defended by the Irishmen, but a number of 'innocent spectators,' who should have been at home, were severely wounded, and houses tenanted by Roman Catholics had all their windows broken." Three days afterward, St. Michael's Catholic Church and school-house, the rectory and some adjacent houses were fired. Another body of rioters gathered at St. Augustine's Church, in the heart of the city; the church was broken open and set on fire. The Mayor was present but powerless (as the Sheriff had been a few days before), even with the city troops, to stay the destruction. Near the church was a school-house which had been used as a hospital during an epidemic of cholera, where the Sisters of Charity had nursed patients of all creeds tenderly, but it was now again a school and contained the valuable library of the Augustinian priests. There were over a thousand volumes, many rare old editions of the classics. The mob flung these books out of the windows, kicked them into heaps in the street and made bonfires of them. Greater and greater outrages were perpetrated, a state of terror almost prevailed, until at last the State troops with cannon quelled the mad outbreak. The world must be improving, for this riot is much worse than that of Atlanta a year ago.

The volume is full of interest, but one extract more and per-

force we must stop: "In December, 1864, there was still another call for three hundred thousand men, and the proclamation of the President allowed less than four weeks for the drafting of this new army, to which Philadelphia's contribution was eleven thousand, five hundred soldiers. It was, however, the last conscription of the war. The South lay devastated, drained of every resource, without money, without food, without ammunition. Boys of fifteen and old gray-haired men were fighting in her enfeebled ranks. The fertile lands were barren of their harvests, and, in the broad track of Sherman's destroying army, women and children starved by their desolate hearths. The end so long deferred had come at last; and on the tenth of April, 1865, word was carried to waiting Philadelphia that the remnant of Lee's forces, a pitiful remnant of twenty-six thousand men, had surrendered to Grant, and the war was over. From her old State House roof rang out the joyful tidings, and every heart responded in rapture to the message of the bell: 'The war is over!' It was hard to believe the truth, hard to feel that the pitiless drafting and the pitiless slaughtering were already things of the past, and that men of one Nation, brothers of one parent stem, were no longer marching to kill each other in open field." "One out of every eight inhabitants — a ghastly proportion — had gone out to fight. What wonder that Pennsylvania's great city should draw a deep breath of relief when this pressure was lifted from her heart!"

In "Lady Baltimore," Owen Wister says, "Kingsport [we all know he means Charleston], holds many sacred nooks, many corners, many vistas that should deeply stir the spirit and the heart of all Americans who know and love their country. The passing traveller may gaze up at certain windows there and see history itself looking out at him, even as she looks out of the windows of Independence Hall in Philadelphia." "There are three churches — St. Philip's, St. Michael's, The Huguenot — shrines where burn venerable lamps of faith. And of these three houses of God, that one holds the most precious flame which treasures the holiest fire that came from France. No Puritan splendor of independence and indomitable courage outshines

theirs. They preached a word as burning as any Plymouth or Salem ever heard. They are less known than Plymouth or Salem because men of action rather than men of letters have sprung from the loins of the South, but they stand a beautiful beacon, shining on the coasts of our early history."

Mrs. Ravenel has worked quarries of Colonial records, old diaries, old account books, old letters, old newspapers, and has cut out cameos of history. She gives illuminating studies of "The Lords Proprietors," "The Governors" (proprietary and royal), "The Church," "Indian Wars," "Conquest of Pirates," etc. She tells this of "The Rise of Methodism," the Methodists now being one of the great religious bodies of the State: "When the Reverend George Whitefield came, by special invitation of General Oglethorpe, to evangelize Georgia, Dr. Garden, in Charleston, received him with equal cordiality. But Whitefield was not to be held within the narrow bounds of rubrics. He was, above all things, a great preacher, and he demanded a great congregation—preferred a big field to a small church, conducted services without prayer-books, and took up collections as willingly in a meeting house as in St. Philip's itself. It was rousing, of course, and probably of permanent benefit to many minds, but it was utterly repugnant to the strictly canonical Commissary, and he had not the slightest doubt but that it was his duty to stop it. He might as well have tried to stop Niagara. Whitefield positively refused to pause in work for which he felt himself inspired, and the tide of his eloquence swept all before it. . . . Dr. Garden appealed and enjoined and finally summoned an ecclesiastical court to try the offender. . . . Whitefield was suspended from office. . . . A touch of secution is the breath of enthusiasm. Whitefield was a martyr, and Methodism grew apace."

Charleston was the most loyal of cities to the English Crown. Sons and daughters, many of them, were sent to England for education. The province was prosperous and had few grievances, but South Carolina joined the sister States in the War of the Revolution. In fact, a week before the Declaration of Independence was signed, the battle of Sullivan's Island was fought and the first victory for the American States had been

gained. The execution of Hayne was equal in brutality to the bloody deed of O'Reilly in New Orleans. "In after days when the act was severely censured in England, Rawdon endeavored to lay the blame on Balfour, who was then dead." It was a cowardly subterfuge. Balfour did suggest it, but Rawdon was in supreme authority. He was obdurate to every appeal made by Whigs or Tories. Of the latter, numbers interceded for Hayne. Lieutenant-Governor Bull, although an ill man and in great pain, had himself carried on a litter into Rawdon's presence personally to ask him to stay his hand. Hayne's motherless little children knelt before him, but the fiat had gone forth. "Hayne, accompanied by several friends, walked to the place of his execution; what should be the manner of his death he did not know until the gibbet came in sight. For an instant he paused and colored, then walked firmly on. A friend exhorted him to die with courage. 'I will try,' then ascending the scaffold without assistance, he prayed a few moments with the clergyman, shook hands with his friends, drew the cap over his face and himself gave the signal to the hangman, dying as a gallant gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche*."

The Society for Psychical Research would find interest in the following curious relation: "The ghastly effect produced on the popular mind by this tragic event was curiously shown by its giving rise to the only *well authenticated* ghost story known in Charleston. On the day of his execution Hayne passed the house of his sister-in-law. She was standing at the window and cried to him in agony: 'Return, return to us.' He replied: 'I will if I can,' and walked on. Ever after, one standing at that window after nightfall would hear a ghostly voice below and steps sounding on the stair and in the hall, as of a man *returning*, never going *down*, always *up*."

Hayne's death annihilated any chances the British had of the conquest of the Province. After that it was war to the knife. Bancroft says of General Sumter: "His campaigns led up to the victories which not only redeemed South Carolina, but gained the independence of America." Hayne's death inspired the whole State to resistance.

The city of Charleston was for years before 1860 a city of

homes—happy, hospitable homes. As hosts, no men or women ever better knew the art of entertaining. “The houses were quite large enough to accommodate the limited society of the time; and there were persons who made it a point to give a ball every year, besides dinners and carpet dances. Nothing gave more satisfaction in the servants’ hall than the housekeeper’s announcement: ‘We’s e gwine to hab a ball nex’ week.’ Ordinary tasks were dropped, all was joyful preparation. Rugs and carpets were rolled back and removed, the waxed floors rubbed to a still brighter polish, the chandeliers, with their long glittering drops, and the girandoles on the little convex mirrors were filled with wax candles, the linen slips, with which careful housekeepers kept their chairs covered, removed, one or two ‘nosegays’ placed in the tall china or cut-glass jars on the high carved mantel-pieces, and all was ready. Many of the rooms were already so handsome with their panelled walls, carved woodwork and coved ceilings, long mirrors in gilt frames, and pictures (generally portraits), that they really needed no transient decorations. People of all ages went to the ball and danced — sedately in a minuet, merrily in a country dance.” “When the negro fiddlers struck up ‘hands across and down the middle,’ young and old joined in, happy as children.” “Suppers were elaborate, boned turkey, game, terrapin stew. The pastry cook and her assistant had been at work for a week making jellies, creams, custards, cakes of all kinds — all made at home. Sometimes there was a flight of imagination. Two doves of *blanc mange* in a nest of fine gold-colored, transparent, shredded candied orange peel, a tall iced cake in the shape of a castle with the American flag on the tower and the arms in colored comfits on the walls.” “There were wines — the old Madeira that had been warming and ripening many a year in cedar-shingled garrets; port, and others; a rum-punch made with pineapples, limes, etc., only too fascinating.” “An average Charleston household of the wealthy class usually had a housekeeper and her assistant, a mamma and as many nursery maids as there were children in the house. Each lady had her maid, who was always a sempstress, and clear-starcher. If the cook was a woman, she had a girl in training and a boy scullion to help her; there were

as many laundresses as the family required, there was a butler, and one or more footmen. A gentleman usually had his body-servant, and the coachman had under him as many stable boys as the number of horses demanded." "Jack, the butler of Judge Huger, disputed with another old man, Harry, the butler of Mrs. Henry Izard, the reputation of being the best and most thoroughly trained servant in town. From judging wines to the arrangement of a salt spoon, there was nothing which these withered, brown potentates did not decide and maintain. Nothing would have astonished either more than that Master or Mistress should dissent from his verdict. Jack was intolerant of anything he considered a breach of etiquette at the table. Nothing could induce him to serve a gentleman before a lady, or a younger brother before an elder brother. To place fruit or wine on a table cloth, instead of upon mahogany, was to him a fall from grace. On one occasion he was much annoyed, a Senator from the up-country twice asked for rice with his fish. To the first request he simply remained deaf, to the second he bent down and whispered into the Senatorial ear. The genial gentleman suppressed a laugh, but when the servants left the room he burst into a roar. 'Judge, you have a treasure. Jack saved me from disgrace, from exposing my ignorance; he whispered, 'that wouldn't do, sir! *We* never eats rice with fish!'"

Five hundred and sixty-five days Charleston stood the siege of Federals in forts and fleet. "With the fall of the city and the Confederacy went out the old life of Charleston." Her biographer has told well what that life was, and in conclusion says: "If the new is or shall be better, purer, braver, or higher, it will be well."

These volumes are written from a well of English undefiled. The treatment, irrespective of the topics, is charming. The civic panoramas could only have been painted by those who had breathed the atmosphere of these cities. The harmonious whole of each volume must be read to be appreciated. Clever as these ladies are, they are not too clever. A humor as gentle as a spring rain falls refreshingly across the page, but there is no

levity. The details are seldom commonplace. When they are, they are imaged with such grace it gives variety:

. . . A shadow of repose
Upon a line of gray.

Miss King may be sometimes pedantic, Miss Repplier in a small degree rhetorical on occasion, it has been objected that Mrs. Ravenel has not said enough of common people; but history told as these women have told it compels the interest of those who read. Von Ranke, after turning ninety, kept cheerfully on with his *Universal History*. It is to be hoped that Mrs. Ravenel, who has only a few years turned seventy, may now be persuaded to write her own reminiscences.

CELINA E. MEANS

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